



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

MEDIA RELEASE

April 7, 2022

Dear Editor / Head of Department,

SEA AWARDS ARE ON THE BASIS OF PRELIMINARY RESULTS ONLY

The Ministry of Education (MOE) wishes to provide clarity on the issue of placement of students who wrote the 2020 Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) Examination. The practice of announcing the placement of students who wrote the SEA in any given year has customarily been based on the preliminary SEA results. Therefore, awards are given on this basis.

It is, however, the right of any parent to query their child's results, which is facilitated by the Caribbean Examination's Council (CXC), the administering body for the SEA. These reviewed results are typically received two months after the preliminary results. This query may or may not alter the marks of students, but does not alter the preliminary placement list, upon which awards are made. This policy has been followed for many years.

The Executive of the MOE therefore views it as extremely unfortunate that a senior official of the Ministry exceeded the authority of their remit by varying the SEA placement list, based on reviewed results of some students, without reference to or approval of the Executive. Further to this variation, the official proceeded to inform the parents and schools of their eligibility for awards, according to the unapproved listing, which resulted in consternation. The official was therefore instructed to revert to the policy position, and to inform the parents and schools accordingly, which was done. As a result of this unilateral action, the achievement of the student who was rightfully announced as first placed, based on the preliminary SEA results of 2020, has been brought into question. This is highly regrettable.

According to Education Minister, Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, *"This is a most unfortunate situation, and though I am very sorry about the distress caused to both children, a precedent cannot be set by the use of reviewed results for this award, as there are other children who would have reviewed their results and have had to abide by the existing policy. The practice of announcing the "Top 200" awards was halted since 2020, and has been replaced with a mechanism whereby the group of children recognized based on preliminary SEA results is more representative of our inclusive society; where effort is applauded as well as high achievement. In 2020, the two students who were top*

placed based on preliminary results were recognized by the MOE, as is the custom, and those are the two who will be awarded. Going forward, this system of public identification and award of the top ranked SEA students will be reviewed. It is my personal view that it has outlived its usefulness, and is now an additional stressor in an already high-stress environment. My deepest apologies go out to both students, who performed excellently and should not have been subjected to this experience."

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